

V E R S E S

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HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND,

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, &c.

IN evil hour, and with unhallow'd voice
 Profaning the pure gift of Poesy,
 Did he begin to sing, He, first who sung
 Of arms, and combats, and the proud array
 Of warriors on the embattled plain, and rais'd
 The aspiring spirit to hopes of fair renown
 By deeds of violence. For since that time
 The imperious Victor, oft, unsatisfied
 With bloody spoil and tyrannous conquest, dares
 To challenge fame and honour; and too oft
 The Poet bending low to lawless power
 Hath paid unseemly reverence, yea, and brought
 Streams, clearest of the Aonian fount, to wash
 Blood-stain'd Ambition. If the stroke of War
 Fell certain on the guilty head, none else;
 If they that make the cause might taste the effect,
 And drink themselves the bitter cup they mix,
 Then might the Bard (tho' child of Peace) delight
 To twine fresh wreaths around the Conqueror's brow,
 Or haply strike his high-toned harp to swell
 The trumpet's martial sound, and bid them on,
 Whom Justice arms for vengeance: but alas!
 That undistinguishing and deathful storm
 Beats heaviest on the exposed innocent;
 And they that stir its fury, while it raves,
 Stand at safe distance; send their mandate forth
 Unto the mortal ministers that wait
 To do their bidding;—Ah, who then regards
 The widow's tears, the friendless orphan's cry,
 And famine, and the ghastly train of woes
 That follow at the dogged heels of War?
 They in the pomp and pride of victory

Rejoicing, o'er the desolated earth,
 As at an altar wet with human blood,
 And flaming with the fire of cities burnt,
 Sing their mad hymns of triumph, hymns to God
 O'er the destruction of his gracious works,
 Hymns to the Father o'er his slaughter'd sons.

Detested be their sword, abhorr'd their name,
 And scorn'd the tongues that praise them ! Happier Thou,
 Of peace and science Friend, hast held thy course
 Blameless and pure, and such is thy renown.
 And let that secret voice within thy breast,
 Approve thee, then shall those high sounds of praise
 Which thou hast heard, be as sweet harmony,
 Beyond this concave to the starry sphere
 Ascending, where the Spirits of the blest
 Hear it well pleas'd. For Fame can enter Heaven
 If Truth and Virtue lead her ; else forbid,
 She rises not above this earthy spot ;
 And then her voice, transient and valueless,
 Speaks only to the herd. With other praise,
 And worthier duty may she tend on Thee :
 Follow Thee still with honour, such as Time
 Shall never violate, and with just applause,
 Such as the Wise and Good might love to share.

